



c.26.46: Cambridge BUSES Chronicle

#### Background

In August 1851 the first horse buses appeared, double deckers drawn by four horses which ran between Cambridge & Shepreth where they connected with trains from Kings Cross; however in [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

1852 the railway line was extended to Cambridge & the buses withdrawn. 1878 plans for horse drawn trams announced, 2 companies each called Cambridge Tramways Co. submit schemes. 1879 The Cambridge Street Tramways Company was formed & in 1880 the service opened & enjoyed a monopoly of the public transport scene. Tramsheds were opened in East Road in 1881

John Leverington was Ortona bus driver in 1920s – memories – 86 07 10b

History of motor buses – feature article by Robin Cox – 65 06 04c

1896

The Cambridge Omnibus Company introduce horse-buses on routes between Railway station, Chesterton Rd & Huntingdon Road; the Cambridge Street Tramway Company also start horse buses in opposition [S.1, Sw.17]

1897

Horse flu epidemic hits both Tramways & horse buses [P.15]

1897 12 22

Cambridge Omnibus Company were sued for damages sustained in an accident of September 25th in Emmanuel Lane, Cambridge. The omnibus in question was licenced to carry 12 passengers inside and 14 outside. On the day in point there were no less than 23 outside, an excessive weight of more than

half a ton and in consequence the vehicle swayed. In Emmanuel Lane there was a cart standing on the left side of the road causing the 'bus to move to the right when the hind off-wheel of the omnibus went sharply against the kerb and immediately collapsed like a pack of cards and all those unfortunate passengers were thrown to the ground. Some of the passengers were shot into a solicitor's office 1897 12 22

1898 08 13

At the general meeting of shareholders of the Cambridge Omnibus Company there was no exuberant spirit of jubilation. In fact, the company seems to have fallen on bad times. Trading for the year had resulted in a very considerable loss. In September an unfortunate accident occurred to one of the company's vehicles, injuring several persons more or less severely. They had the misfortune to lose by death nine horses. One thing that had swelled the amount of loss was the state of the roads. It must be patent to everyone that the roads were very destructive to the wheels, more particularly the main streets where there were tram lines c1898 08 13

1899 08 31

The annual meeting of the Cambridge Bus Company was told they had taken £500 more than last year, and £400 more in d. fares. Shareholders must bear in mind that the year before they had a loss of £1,563 of which about £1,100 was due to losses in consequence of accidents. All must admit that the Company had gained more of the confidence of the public, and the natural outcome would be increased prosperity in the future c1899 08 31

1900 09 14

The Cambridge Omnibus Company and the Tramways Company have entered into an arrangement whereby the Omnibus Company is to leave the whole of the trams route free for the Tramways Company. They in their turn will withdraw all their one-horse 'buses, thus leaving to the Omnibus Company all parts of the town not covered by the tram lines. The arrangement comes into operation on Monday next c00 09 14 [Sw.18]

1900 04 21

A serious bus accident happened in Mill Road, Cambridge. The omnibus was waiting for passengers opposite the Royal Standard public house and while the driver was talking on the path, the horses for some unknown reason bolted. The driver and conductor immediately ran after the horses, but were unable to catch them. Two passengers named Annie & Frances Scull, who were on the top of the 'bus jumped off. When the bus was about to pass the Durham Ox it collided with a market cart belonging to Jonas Wilmott, carrier of Orwell and then another cart in charge of Eli Newman, a hawker, of Bottisham CDN 1900 04 21

1901 07 13

What say the shareholders of the Cambridge Tramways Company to the advent of a new service of motor buses working only from Market Hill to the Station – a penny service running from 8.30am to 9.30 pm. I have been assured by one of the promoters that the first of a batch of six new motor 'buses intended to be used on the new smooth road from the Post Office to the station will be tried in Cambridge within a month. It is certain such rivalry would destroy the present useful and satisfactory tram service – "A" CDN 1901 07 13

1902

Cambridge Omnibus Company go out of business; depot on Chesterton Road (Frosts garage) closed [S.1]

1902 08 06

Popular Country Drives. The "Alexandra" and "Coronation" char-a-bancs will leave Cambridge Market Hill on Wednesday for Shelford, Newton and Whittlesford; return fare 1s. Thursday special drive to Royston, Friday Haslingfield and Saturday Earith bridge. Special Sunday drive to

Whittlesford Bridge pleasure gardens. H. Buck, jobmaster, Crown Inn, Jesus Lane, Cambridge –  
advert CDN 1902 08 06

1902 09 16

The news that it has been decided to wind up the business of the Cambridge Omnibus Company will be received with a great deal of regret. If they cease running they will be very seriously missed. Many employees in shops and offices now live so far from their places of employment that without the benefit of the omnibuses it would be a serious tax on their strength to get to and from their homes in the hour usually allowed for dinner. The distance of the remoter parts of the town from the station will be a serious disadvantage to residents and lead to depreciation in the value of property. CDN 1902 09 16

1902 09 20

Sir – Many people have felt genuine concern at the announcement that the Cambridge Omnibus Company is to be “wound up”. Huntingdon Road, Old and New Chesterton, Mill Road and the rapidly growing suburb of New Cherryhinton have all benefited by its service. It is regretted that in spite of the hundred the Company has conveyed daily, the venture does not pay. Their difficulty is the Tram Company’s opportunity and they should arrange for a good suburban service of ‘buses to run in conjunction with their cars – New Cherryhinton c02 09 20

1902 10 01

It was a foregone conclusion that the business of the Cambridge Omnibus Company should be wound up. It was finally agreed to endeavour to dispose of it as a going concern and we are still convinced that under thoroughly effective management the business could be conducted at a profit. In the statement of company assets the horses were valued at £16 apiece but within three weeks their condition had changed considerably for the worse and the average is now about £6. The most valuable assets of the Company had been allowed to become seriously depreciated at a time when the Directors knew that to continue the business was impossible. This is one of the “glaring mistakes” which have been made CDN 1902 10 01

1902 11 20

Unfortunately the Cambridge Omnibus Company have been unable to find a purchaser for their business as a going concern and their horses, omnibuses etc had to be sold at their stables in Chesterton Road. A two-horse omnibus to carry 26 passengers fitted with garden seats on the top sold for 20 guineas. Buses by the ‘Star Omnibus Company’ were not in such good condition and realised £10 while others went for as low a sum as £4.10s. The one-horse ‘buses did not sell for much but a four-horse charabanc, “The Cambridge Belle” sold for 62 guineas to Mr Ellis Merry. Prices for horses dropped to as low as three guineas. CDN 1902 11 20

1902 11 26

The new motor omnibuses which are being constructed for the London streets promise well. If they fulfil what is claimed for them they will beyond question be a great boon. They are capable of speeds up to fourteen miles an hour and Cambridge people will heartily wish some speculative philanthropists would put two or three such vehicles on our roads. The old omnibus company is being sorely missed, especially by people living in the suburbs; the old familiar vehicles, unsatisfactory as they were, were yet better than nothing CDN 1902 11 26

1902 12 13

A meeting of residents in St John’s Ward, Cherry Hinton considered what support could be given to a scheme for running a line of omnibuses into Cambridge. Now buses had been taken off the road the value of their property would depreciate and the new houses being built would not be let readily as people would not come down that end of Cambridge if there were no buses. There was a possibility of their finding sufficient money to run a line of buses themselves if 15 people put £10 each into the concern CDN 1902 12 13

1904

British Electric Traction abandon scheme, sell their tramways shares to Cambridge Electric Traction Syndicate public meeting debates proposed electrification of trams with lines to Chesterton, Romsey, Silver Street & along Backs, opposed due to overhead power lines & price, people would prefer motor buses [2.19,3.2, Sw.20]

1904 03 16

A meeting of Cambridge Omnibus Company shareholders was convened to receive the Liquidator's accounts, showing the manner in which the winding up of the Company has been conducted. It had been impossible to sell the business as a going concern. The livestock and machinery were sold by auction for £768 but there was still a considerable deficiency. Not a single shareholder attended the meeting and the Board of Trade will be contacted to sanction the destruction of the company's books and the Liquidator's accounts. – 04 03 16

1904 09 15

A poorly-attended council meeting considered an offer from the Cambridge Electric Tramways Syndicate to electrify and extend the present tramway system. The overhead trolley system for running the cars would not to be employed in King's Parade without the consent of the council. But consultants say that the existing lines in Kings Parade should be abandoned & they cannot recommend new lines in the town centre because the narrowness of the streets would generate great opposition from residents. A new line should be laid in Silver Street but this is so narrow that the trams would take their turn with ordinary road traffic and keep to the left. There may be some objection to a track down Queen's Road which has the character of a boulevard but this would not be disturbed by the working of the tramways. The busiest section would be Hills Road where trams would run at about 2¾ minute intervals. 04 09 15

1904 11 10

Sir – while Cambridge is hesitating in what course should be adopted with regard to the tramway system two of the London bus companies have adopted motor traction. It is strange that after all the progress made by the petrol engine that one has adopted steam. The difficulties for a good petrol bus are many as frequent stopping and starting is required with much changing of gear. The steam bus has many advantages as any variation of speed is got by merely turning on more or less steam. Electric buses are out of the question as the batteries are too heavy and will only travel about 40 miles on one charge. The overhead electric trolley system disfigures the street by the overhead wires but can be relied upon and with ornamental trolley poles they do not look half as bad as it is made out – C. North, Cambridge. 04 11 10

1905 05 23

motor buses start : 2 companies formed to compete for passengers: Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company & Cambridge Town & University Motor Omnibus Company; 2,000 carried on first day but within week a postcard is issued depicting buses running over dogs & knocking down lampposts; Cambridge Town & University Company wound up [2.20, 2.21, S.4]

1905 02 16

Public interest in growing in the development of the motor omnibus service. The most recent improvements in construction largely obviate noise and other inconveniences. The cars travel smoothly, pick their way through traffic with ease and are amenable to all the controls essential in crowded streets. Unlike the tramways it involves no expense of electric installation, no overhead wires or underground conduit and may thread its way among vehicles of all sorts without led or hindrance. Village travellers may shortly see the carriers' carts which have laboured up the hill roads for generations replaced by a swift locomotion which will make the remotest hamlet seem no more than a suburb of the market town. 05 02 16

1905 03 10

A company is being formed to provide a service of motor 'buses for Cambridge. Eight 'buses will be put down at first by which it is hoped to run a 15 minutes' service from Chesterton, another from the Huntingdon road district to the centre of town and a seven minutes' service to the railway station. Should the venture prove successful the more outlying districts such as Newnham Croft and Cherry Hinton will be catered for 05 03 10

1905 04 08

The Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company has been formed. It is nowadays essential for the business of the town to have a convenient and quick means of transit and the omnibuses will be appreciated by the public and become a source of income to the shareholders. With eight vehicles it will be quite easy to maintain a 15-minute service from Chesterton and the Huntingdon Road to the centre of town and a seven-minute service to the railway station. Should these prove successful it will be extended to outlying districts such as Newnham Croft and Cherry Hinton. There is little doubt that horse traction for omnibuses and tramcars will shortly be superseded by petrol and electricity. 05 04 08a

1905 04 10

A keen struggle is to be witnessed in Cambridge for the privilege of conveying people by means of that modern convenience, the motor omnibus. On Saturday the prospectus of the Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company made its appearance and today we carry one for another company, the Cambridge University and Town Motor Omnibus Company. They hope to have their first bus on the streets soon. Owing to the boom in buses there is difficulty in securing these vehicles but they have five chassis (the working parts) and the coach work is being pushed forward as quickly as possible 05 04 10c

1905 04 14

The battle of the 'buses in Cambridge commences in real earnest. The 'bus armies are known as the Motor Omnibus Company Ltd and the Cambridge University and Town Motor Omnibus Company Ltd and will battle on practically even terms. They are of different manufacture, the first by Thorneycroft will accommodate 32 passengers, 14 inside and 18 out. Its body is dark blue with yellow decoration. The other is the Straker-Squire type, painted Cambridge blue. Both are driven by petrol, have non-slipping tyres and upholstered with spring cushions inside and seats like light garden chairs outside. 05 04 14d&e

1905 04 15

The rival Cambridge buses ran trial trips round the town to demonstrate the suitability of this form of traction and both were eminently successful. The Thorneycroft's hill-climbing capacities were tested on Castle Hill and seemed to present no difficulties except a decrease in speed; the Straker-Squire passed with the greatest ease. Both naturally created somewhat of a sensation in the streets and the way they threaded their way in and out of the busy traffic excited much admiration. They were under perfect control and could pass through traffic where a horsed vehicle would have to wait its turn. 05 04 15

1905 04 15

Both Cambridge buses started to ply for hire and the novelty induced people to make trips. Had several more 'buses been running they would have been crowded. The scene on Market Hill was unprecedented. Apart from those who lined one pavement in the hope of obtaining a seat it was alive with folk who were content with watching. As soon as a vehicle drew up a crowd swarmed around the steps, clutching the handrail and endeavouring to get a foothold on the step. Each time there were many left waiting on the pavement disappointed and most waited until it returned. 05 04 15 & a

1905 04 17

The new Cambridge buses have experienced their first small accident. The 'Light Blue' was slowing down in St Andrew's Street and drew up close to the kerb in order to take in a passenger. The incline of the road naturally caused a slight tilt of the bus and as the cradles of the street lamps project over the road the two met with the result that the top of the lamp was bent and a pane of glass smashed. 05 04 17a

1905 04 17

The arrival of the motor buses does not appear to be disturbing the Cambridge Tramway Company who are about to introduce a better service on the Post Office – Station Road route by constructing an extra loop line. So many made bus rides ‘for the fun of the thing’ that the trams gave many on business bent their only opportunity for quicker transit to and from the station. The conditions will change when ‘abnormal’ passengers on the buses have been reduced and those whose object is facility in travelling and not amusement will have unrestricted access to the automobiles. 05 04 17a

1905 05 26

Chesterton residents will be glad to see the inauguration of a new motor ‘bus service by the ‘Light Blue’ company. Special arrangements have been made for the convenience of residents intending to travel to London by the early morning train. The ‘bus will leave Old Chesterton Green at 8.25 and run through to the station in time for the 8.53 train. It will also run as frequently as possible between one and two-thirty for the convenience of residents employed in Cambridge who go to the suburbs for their midday meal 05 05 26

1905 06 15

Almost before Cambridge has had time to recover from the shock of the Fen Ditton ferry tragedy another sad fatality has occurred. A conductor employed by the Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company was on the front of the vehicle talking to the driver when another bus passed. He leant out to shout something to it, hanging on to the handrail when his head struck a lamppost. He was thrown underneath the ‘bus and one of the hind wheels crashed over his head, which was battered out of recognition. 05 06 15a (& others)

1905 06 16

Sir – whilst regretting the shocking death of the bus conductor it must be said that my company, the Cambridge University and Town Motor Omnibus Company (the ‘Light Blue’) have carried 68,000 passengers in the last two months without a single accident having been reported to me – James Hammond, Manager. 05 06 16

1905 07 01

The ‘Light Blue’ bus was chartered to take 20 King’s College men to Hunstanton and back. The driver sent telegrams reporting their progress. The bus departed at 6.40 and reached at Ely at 7.50 where the party breakfasted before finally arriving at 2.20 in the afternoon. The return journey commenced at 4 pm and the passengers were safely landed in Cambridge just before eleven. All agreed the trip was successful: the roads were perfect, the scenery appreciated and only one light shower fell. The bus pulled well and travelled the 120 miles without the slightest hitch. 05 07 01a

1905 07 25

A bus driver employed by the Cambridge Town and University Motor Omnibus Company was summoned after an accident with a tram. He had tried to overtake a trolley when one of his mudguards touched the tram’s front handrail. The collision caused the tram to leave the line and go to the other side of the road. He claimed he could have got through but the tram horse had become frightened at the noise of the bus and quickened its pace; he had seen the horse ‘dance about’ on several occasions. But magistrates said the bus driver had been too anxious to pass; the state of the roads necessitated the greatest care and patience. 05 07 25a

1905 08 01

A Cambridge motorist was summoned for driving a motor omnibus without having a hackney carriage driver’s licence. PC Wade said the bus, carrying passengers, was driven on to the pavement, damaging a lamp and flagstones. The driver said he lost control as it was not the same gear he was used to. It was the usual practice to try a man before applying for a licence and he was being taught to steer under the supervision of a qualified person. He was fined 5s. 05 08 01

1905 08 19

Sir – the present motor buses are exceedingly disappointing. They are far too cumbrous and top heavy; in the narrow streets people on the paths run the risk of being struck by the projecting bodies. In damp or frosty weather the top heaviness may cause the wheels to skid and one fears the consequences should one overturn. They are very noisy and the stench from the oil is intolerable – in fact the streets are contaminated all day long with the disgusting effluvia – ‘Ratepayer’ 05 08 19

1906

Magistrates refuse to relicense buses, the experiment ends. Mr Buck of Chesterton operates horse-bus from Chesterton [S.8]

1906 05 07

The motor omnibus has now had a fair trial on the streets of London and has shown its worth despite more vibration, noise and smell than the electric tramcar. It is quicker and subject to less obstruction than a vehicle on rails. The liability to fire, the unpleasant smell and noise are receiving the attention of engineers and the future prospect is that the ‘Mobus’ will become assistants and feeders to all classes of rail vehicles. 06 05 07a

1906 09 05

PC Wright said he was in Regent Street when he saw the Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company’s bus discharging a great quantity of black smoke, it was filling the street as it went along and was the worst he had ever seen. The driver said they had just had a refill of oil and agreed to take it back to the garage, smoking all the way along Park Terrace. The company said there was nothing wrong but was fined £2. 06 09 05 & a

1906 10 10

A Cambridge bus driver appeared in court for dangerous driving in Hills Road. He said he was going 15 mph because he was obliged to pass another bus. It was not illegal as Parliament had fixed the maximum as 20 mph. The road was wide and there were no pedestrians about. The policeman admitted he had little experience of motors but had never seen one go faster. The driver had now been dismissed because of the complaint. 06 10 10

1907

Hills Road garage opens [RH]

1907 08 03

Four new motor buses (three single and one double-decker) will commence their careers of usefulness by running to the Mammoth Show. Regular routes will be arranged as soon as possible. They are as noiseless as it is possible for motor buses to be, free from obnoxious odours, do not drop oil over the streets and are very easily handled. They are the property of a private speculator who took over the late Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company and will be managed by Mr J. Berry Walford. Called ‘Ortona’ after name of a cruise ship 07 08 03

1908 08 22

The Ortona Motorbus Company, inaugurated a year ago, now possesses five double-deckers, a char-a-banc and a big ‘bus’. They have two services from the railway station, one to De Freville and the other to Huntingdon Road. At the well-equipped garage on Hills Road there is always one car that can be despatched the instant a breakdown is reported and even replacing a broken axle can be carried out by their own mechanics. Now country people who used to disfavour these ‘machinations of the evil one’ patronise them with perfect confidence. CWN 08 08 22 p5

1909 12 03

The Ortona Motor Bus Company, whose enterprise has proved such a boon in Cambridge and Chesterton, intend to commence a service to Sawston via Trumpington, Shelford and Stapleford. A

fine new Maudsley bus has been obtained which will do the full journey in 50 minutes. Parcels as well as passengers will be carried CWN 09 12 03

1910 02 04

Since the Ortona Bus Company was established in Cambridge they have done much towards linking up the station and the town with outlying suburbs. A few weeks ago they commenced a service of motor 'buses to Trumpington, Shelford and Sawston and have now inaugurated another to Histon and Cottenham which has been well patronised by passengers 10 02 04m

1912

Harry Bevan joined the Ortona Motor Company in 1912 and for seven years drove the bus to Sawston, for which he was allowed 50 minutes each way. Carrying parcels as well as a steady stream of passengers he made five journeys a day and using the maximum speed of 12 mph always had time for a good smoke break at the end. The first double-decker ran from Station Road Corner to the Rock Hotel on Cherry Hinton Road and back via Blinco Grove. It was not allowed to go through the town because it was a menace to shop signs. 60 08 18a & b

1912 11 04

A serious collision in Silver Street between two motor buses was only averted by the skill of the drivers. A horse and cart were standing in the road near the Capital and Counties Bank, opposite the Automobile Garage where alterations are taking place. The bus to Chesterton made a sharp angle to clear the cart but the on-coming heavily laden bus had approached a little too far. The mudguards came in contact and the front wheels were inter-locked. The passengers were much alarmed but little damage was done. Ortona have not had a single serious accident since they have been established in Cambridge. 12 11 04d

1913 04 18

The enterprising Newmarket and District 'Bus Company plans a motor bus service for Soham on market days departing from the Crown Hotel at 12.30 on Tuesdays and arriving at Newmarket an hour later. On Thursdays they leave from the Market Square for Ely. The vehicles, supplied by the London General 'Bus Companies, present an exceedingly smart appearance, being painted yellow picked out with dark blue. They have electric light and are exceptionally quiet running. The company has already started a service of buses between Burwell and Newmarket, doing three journeys a day 13 04 18 p11 CIP

1914

Cambridge Street Tramways Company go into liquidation, last trams have notices urging people to let their children ride so they would remember them; last journey 18th February, undergraduates in mourning attire escort last tram to depot chanting funeral dirge; stock sold by auction, trams £10 each[3.4,3.5,6.1]

1914 04 24

Motor Bus Service between Cambridge and Royston was commenced. At present the buses are making three journeys each way, calling at the intermediate villages. 14 04 24 CIPof

1914 07 17

The Ortona Motor Bus Company agreed to make payment to the council for every mile their buses travelled on their roads to cover wear and tear. This meant where traffic was very heavy the motor buses would pay for all expense and something over. Both recognised that the council had no real legal claim but Mr Walford was most anxious to meet them. However the Motor Bus Company was not prepared to give them anything whatever. The huge 'buses running in an almost continuous stream every six or seven minutes were sufficient for public service but their speed should be regulated 14 07 17 p7

1914 11 27

Ortona buses requisitioned for war 14 11 27

1915 01 29

Walter Gilbert told the court he was travelling in an Ortona motor bus towards the station. Since the war began there had been a considerable demand for motor buses for purposes connected with the war and the company was running a very antiquated vehicle of very faulty condition. The wheel base was short, making a tendency for the bus to swerve round with great force and made it very unwieldy. The conductor might become accustomed to these acrobatic feats but it was not safe for passengers. On most buses there was a bell at the back which could be pulled when one wanted to get off and another at the top. But on this one passengers had to go downstairs or wait for the conductor to come up 15 01 29

1915 03 26

The Ortona Motor Company had agreed to pay Cambridge Corporation £100 a year for the right to erect posts advertising the running of the buses. As the Corporation had no power to charge mileage for the use of the road this was a substantial income. With the outbreak of war the military had commandeered nine of the vehicles but they would agree to the terms after the conclusion of the war. But the council had really granted them a monopoly: the trams used to pay £100 per annum and they were paying nothing 15 03 26

1915 08 13

Covers on Bus Seats.—The attention of the Cambridge Watch Committee has been called to the fact that the Ortona Motor Bus Company has not provided covers for the seats of the omnibuses and it was agreed that the Town Clerk write to the Company requesting them to provide waterproof aprons for the seats on top of the buses. 15 08 13 CIPof

1916

Eastern Counties introduce conductresses on Cambridge services; pictures of conductresses from 1916 – 40 05 28 [6.4]

1918

12 mph speed limit for buses ends [S.12]

1918

Introduction of motor bus services after 1918 greatly enhances Cambridge as a county shopping centre [3.6]

1919

Whippet operate service to Cambridge from St Ives [S.16]

1919 03 12

Bus service allegations of inadequacy, irregularity and overcrowding; interview with J.B. Walford of Ortona with details, including wartime when ran buses to Ministry of Munitions works at Hauxton and Grantchester – 19 03 12b

1919 10 08

Termination of the railway strike; marching back to work, Ortona under pressure but bring in more supplies of petrol – 19 10 08g

1920

Cambridge Belle motor coach first to operate regular excursions from Cambridge [Ch.13.12.33.p14]

1922

Burwell & District Motor Services Ltd formed [S.16]

1923 11 24

Sir with reference to the continuation bus service from Chesterton to Old Chesterton, I would like to point out that we ran the service in 1919 but it was an absolute failure and we were compelled to drop it. However as there seems to be a fresh demand I am giving it a trial. The terminus of the cars will be at Chapel Street, Old Chesterton, instead of De Freville Avenue as heretofore. The fare from Market Street to Chapel Street will be twopence. You will realise that it is quite impossible to revert to the penny fare over the whole of the services. It is true that the price of petrol has dropped, but the price of wages and labour generally has not decreased - John Walford, Ortona Motor Company

1924 12 02

The question of a parking place for buses and private motor cars was discussed at some length by Cambridge town council. The Watch Committee suggested that Drummer Street should be used as a parking place for motor cars and buses. The Surveyor submitted a plan which included taking in a portion of Christ's Pieces. It was resolved that the scheme should not be entertained and a proposal be considered for constructing a parking place on Butts Green

1925 08

proposals to create a bus station at Drummer Street cause great protest; 3,000 sign petition, 1,000 march to Mayor's house to demand another Council meeting, August [2.4]

1925 08 09

The Corporation seems to have stirred up a good deal of indignation by their proposals with regard to the Drummer Street "motor park". In a town like Cambridge it certainly seems unwise to do anything that may detract from its attractiveness. A suggestion has been put that the 'park' should be established on Butt's Green and not at Drummer Street at all. A petition has been presented to the Mayor asking her to call at Town's meeting and it is hoped that the request will be acceded to c25 08 09

1925 08 23

As the result of an open-air meeting on Parker's Piece efforts are being made to form a Ratepayers' Association whose first business will be to contest the legality of the Cambridge Town Council's action in encroaching on Christ's Pieces for the purpose of providing a parking place for motor vehicles. This was absolutely illegal. Within twelve months the continual movement of vehicles on what was virtually a made-up bog the road would drop six inches. The Ortona Bus Company will be the first people to say they have been pushed into a rotten corner that is of no use to them c25 08 23

1925 11 28

Drummer Street proposals go ahead, opens in November & various country buses stop there rather than on Senate House Hill; later Ortona also use it, causing overcrowding & disputes [1.14]

1926 02 27

Householders in Chesterton Road have petitioned Cambridge Borough Council to lodge protest against the speed at which vehicles of the Ortona Motor Omnibus Company are driven down the road. "The effect of the excessive speed at which these jolting juggernauts are driven is to produce an intermittent earthquake which is doing great damage to our houses". They should not be allowed to exceed 10 mph, increasing to 15 mph when pneumatic tyres are fitted. The present indulgence, which allows solid-tyred vehicles to bump along at 20 to 25 mph, is altogether unreasonable, they claim c26 02 27

1926 07 24

County Council squabble over whether they should pay for Drummer Street [1.15]

1927 04 03

A small group had a very enjoyable trip to London on one of the new Varsity Pullman motor coaches which it proposed to run daily between the metropolis & Cambridge & Oxford. The handsome saloon

coach provides plenty of elbow and leg room for 20 passengers, completely enclosed and protected from the weather. Small mahogany tables can be raised at will for dining and other purposes. Balloon tyres and four wheel brakes are fitted and at all speeds the coach travelled smoothly and steadily. The journey to the West End was accomplished in 2¼ hours. c27 04 03

1928 05 07

Cambridge Town Council granted licences to Messrs Brown Bros for a new Lancia saloon motor coach and the Westminster Coaching Services for three additional coaches. Coun. Doggett asked if the vehicles were fitted with pneumatic tyres and if they would not licence any with solid tyres from the point of view of wear and tear of the roads and the comfort of travellers. It was only a matter of time before solid tyred vehicles would be barred from using the roads at all. There was a nuisance with regard to bus tickets being thrown down in the roads and the Ortona Motor Bus Co are to be asked to provide receptacles for bus tickets on the buses plying in Cambridge. c28 05 07

1928 09 30

Cambridge Watch Committee granted Messrs Brown Bros a further licence for a Lancia coach to ply for hire at Drummer Street on condition that only one of their buses is to stand there at any one time. But Ortona had six to 14 buses there at a time & Messrs Brown advertised fares at 6d to a shilling cheaper. Ortona paid the Council £250 towards the rates but if the public was being charged extra it was time this was dispensed with. A custom had grown up amongst police and other to give Ortona preference because they sent buses to various places, whilst the others went to only one. c28 09 30

1928 12 05

Ortona extend garage [4.12]

1929

Ortona announce their passengers have increased from 2 to 10million over last 10 years [2.7]

1930

Six drivers arrested near Holy Trinity church after challenging police regulations [2.12]

1930 05 15

A councillor complained that in 1921 an agreement had been signed with the Ortona Bus Company allowing them a monopoly of buses on the streets of Cambridge for a payment of £250 a year. "They have had a jolly good picking. There are no workmen's tickets, no children's tickets, no cheap tickets, which you get in any other town". The Mayor said the streets were already so congested that it was not possible to have competitive services in operation. But Ortona had been issued with extra licences to run buses on those same narrow streets. 30 05 15 & a

1930 06 19

Since 1921 the Ortona Bus Company has paid Cambridge Corporation £250 annually; this was for permission to fix bus stop signs on lamppost but in practice constituted a monopoly. Much had been made of the problems of running buses owing to the narrowness of the streets but Ortona had increased its services from nine to 33 for which the Corporation received the wonderful sum of 14s. a day. A maximum number of licences should be fixed and granted between the other companies who could run buses at a cheaper rate and reduce fares. 30 06 19b

1930 06 21

Six Cambridge bus drivers involved in the 'battle' of Sidney Street on the first day of the May races appeared in court charged with obstruction. Only Ortona buses were allowed to stop there but a long line of coaches had filled the whole side of the road. The drivers said the monopoly was unfair. They also complained that Ortona had increased the price of a ticket to Fen Ditton from twopence halfpenny to sixpence a trip. 30 06 21aa & b

1930 08 14

Hubert Gautrey a Cottenham motor car agent claimed £60 from Messrs M. Mack, motor coach proprietors. They had advertised two Gilford 1929 sunlight saloon coaches for sale. They wanted £1,120 per coach or £2,240 for the two and agreed to pay him £40 per coach commission if he found a purchaser. This he had done, but Mack's claimed the buyer had only paid £1,850 and they had reduced the sum to £20. 30 08 14c

1930 09 09

An Ortona omnibus collided with a stationary Ford van at Old Chesterton and the impact was so great that the van was hurled twenty yards along the road. William Holmes was delivering meat when the bus crashed into the rear of his butcher's vehicle. He was taken completely by surprise and flung across the footpath but managed to save a 70-year-old lady, Mrs Mansfield, by pulling her away. The van's steering gear was smashed, the body splintered and meat to the value of £10 scattered on the road. 30 09 09

1930 11 28

A drastic reduction in Cambridge to London motor coach prices is the latest phase in an intensive 'war' between the two established 'outside' companies and local proprietors. There were two independent daily services provided by Westminster Coaches and the 'Varsity but then A. & H Brown of Lord Astor coaches started another at four shillings return. They have now allied with Royal Blue and Comfort coaches to reduce the fare by a shilling and increase services. Westminster and Varsity are now charging 2s 6d and Cambridge is awaiting the next move with interest 30 11 28

1930 12 06

Sir – we are a locally owned firm with its own garage, employing 57 people and we try to give a good service. Between October and March each year we lose a considerable amount of money and rely on summer business to get profits. We do not discharge staff because we overhaul and repaint our rolling stock. We stick to our own service and do not interfere with our competitors. But now our rivals have starting cutting fares. We have got to defend ourselves and the public will benefit from cheap rides until further notice. –Varsity Express Motors 30 12 06a

1930 12 08

Cambridge coach war – Cambridge Comfort Coaches reply to Varsity – 30 12 08

1931

Road Transport Act restricts number of buses [S.20]

1931 10 03

Ortona taken over by Eastern Counties, bus colour changes from green to red [1.17]; all routes have 100 added to their number - thus route 1(Chesterton to railway station) becomes 101 [1.16]

1931 12 19

Varsity Express coach refused licence for London to Bournemouth service [1.18]

1931

Drummer Street bus shelters erected [3.15]

1931 01 10

An Ortona conductor was summoned for allowing 60 passengers on to a single-decker bus licensed to carry 37. It was a very busy day just before Christmas. The bus had started from Sutton and the trouble arose at Denny End, Waterbeach where there were a number of passengers wanting to go to Cambridge market. The bus had to pull up at the railway station to set down passengers and people waiting there wanted to get on. The conductor did his best to prevent them but was helpless. He tried to get them to transfer to a relief bus but they would not get off. 31 01 10b

1931 05 01

At Cambridge the railway companies have a financial interest and working agreement with the Ortona bus company. The time will come when co-ordination will be very close; already they have had two experiments when railway return tickets could be used on the buses and vice versa, the Ortona chairman told an inquiry. In both borough and county they worked routes which were good and bad and excursions and long-distance tours helped to pay for unremunerative town services. 31 05 01c

1931 07 24

Reliance Coach Services of Cottenham had three coaches and had contracted to purchase another vehicle for £1,500. They operated services from Cambridge to Cottenham and Willingham; their buses ran five minutes before Ortona's but usually they waited for the Ortona drivers to start up and then got away faster in their smaller vehicle. Now they planned a new service from Haddenham via the Twentypence Bridge 31 07 24b & c

1931 08 28

Passengers had a remarkable escape when a motor coach overturned in a field near the Granta bridge, Great Chesterford, making a double somersault before coming to rest on its side. Pandemonium reigned for a few minutes and the shrieks of the women and children rent the night air. The Greyhound public house was turned into a dressing station; there was hardly a passenger who escaped without a scratch of some kind and it was pitiful to hear the children crying from fright. Many had not been on a coach trip before. 31 08 28b

1931 10 02

Heydon bus operator – E.E. Weeden, Withers of Haverhill, Raynham of Saffron Walden – applications – 31 10 02 m & n

1931 11 06

The keenness of competition between omnibus operators in the March area was apparent when the Traffic Commissioners heard applications for bus licences. The March Motor Co. operated services to Chatteris carrying 1,826 passengers a week. But the Railway Company objected saying they were the only operator to keep to a timetable. Their Benwick service averaged 350 on the two days a week that it ran. It had begun in 1922, but lapsed for some years until resumed in October 1930. W. Spriggs of Parson Drove had one of his buses stopped by police for being overcrowded and it had twice broken down. 31 11 06c

1931 02 05

Premier Travel Ltd has been formed to take over the services of Royal Blue Coaches of Chesterton Road and the Harston and District Motor Services. Managing director, E.A. Lainson, says there is a definite need for a good independent transport company. They will offer special excursions to Hunstanton, Southend and Yarmouth, run motor tours to Europe all year round and also conduct a travel agency for steamship, motor coach and aeroplane services. 36 02 05

1932 05 09

The old Ortona bus company had a sort of family arrangement with the workers. But with the formation of Eastern Counties the men had suffered cuts in wages. A midnight meeting of 200 employees instructed the Transport and General Workers' Union to open negotiations for wages of 1s 4d (07p) an hour for drivers, 1s 2d (06p) for conductors, for a 48-hour week. On public holidays the pay should be double time. 32 05 09

1932 05 14

Ortona garage – line of men applying work as bus drivers and conductors – photo – 32 05 14

1932 07 08

Sir – since Eastern Counties Omnibus Company took over from Ortona the conditions of employment are far worse. Conductors now have to write numbers in tiny squares all day and only get 2s 6d a week extra for working a double-deck bus. The old firm granted a permanent pass for employees'

wives, now they get none. Cleaners and fitters - the highly-skilled men who tend the fleet - earn over a pound a week less than before. – A Ratepayer 32 07 08c

1932

Fifty years ago (from 1982) a trip to London by coach did not take much longer that it does today. Gordon Carter, aged 72, who used to drive for Varsity coaches, remembers that it took about two and a half hours. It was a journey he did three times a day: “We would just have time for a cup of tea and then start off again”. It cost seven shillings (35p) day return until a customer battle with the opposition, Browns based in Occupation Road, drove the fare down to half-a-crown (12p) 82 10 01

1932 10 07

Varsity Express Motors asked to be allowed to increase the average speed of their motor coaches on the Cambridge-London route to 25 mph – it would cut 15 minutes off the journey. The early morning coach leaving at 6.30 made very few pickups and it would be useful if it arrived in London before 9 o'clock as most of the coaches leave for the coast then. They manage to catch some by dropping passengers on their route but it was difficult to get to Regent Street in time for the Bournemouth coach. 32 10 07b

1932 10 28

Bus companies applied for an increase in fares due to the threepence a gallon rise in the cost of petrol. Buses averaged about nine miles per gallon. But there was no doubt the number of bus services now running were not justified. Before the Road Traffic Act of 1931 there had been a feverish rush of bus owners on to the road. Services were put in which did not pay, except by causing the extinction of rival operators. 32 10 28

1932 10 28

A Baroness complained that without buses it was impossible for people in Storey's Way to keep cooks – they are elderly people and cannot ride bicycles. Many households had reduced the number of servants. She herself had been obliged to give up her car and lower her expenditure considerably, consequently she was an ardent bus-rider. Lady Hope of Herschel Road said the buses ran irregularly and never in connection with one to the railway station. But very few Grange Road residents used them and some would even object to a service. 32 10 28d

1933

Varsity sell out to Eastern Counties [RH]

1933 01 17

The owner of Reliance Motors, Cottenham, sued Eastern Counties Omnibus Company for damages. They alleged he'd run two hackney carriage licensed cars between Cottenham and Midsummer Fair, picking up and putting down passengers en route. To use private cars or taxis as motor coaches was misconduct of a very bad kind. He had four motor buses and two taxicabs which he'd used that day for private hire, charging four shillings return. He produced his order book – written on blotting paper – as proof. 33 01 17 & 17a

1933 01 04

Bus season tickets – 33 01 04 & a

1933 02 16

Reliance and Comfort coaches merge – 33 02 16

1933 03 16

“Undergraduate Roadways” want route to Skegness – 33 03 16 [1.13]

1933 07 18

Two Cambridge bus drivers had their lives saved by the use of new equipment acquired by the Borough Ambulance. D.G. Boyd & R.A. Doe became overcome by exhaust fumes after doing duty on the starting gang at the Hills Road garage and were removed to hospital. Boyd was revived from a state of unconsciousness through the use of the Novox resuscitation apparatus and Doe also benefited by the oxygen mixture. A conductor was also slightly affected by fumes, but quickly recovered 33 07 18

1934

International Progressive Coaches started [RH]

1934 03 12

Who is the author of a manifesto issued at the Eastern Counties' Cambridge garage? Headed "The Cambridge Busmen" it alleges victimisation in the dismissal of George Proctor, secretary of the Busmen's Union. He has been made redundant after working as a turner for 12 years. The reasons for this are clear: our resistance to future wage cuts must be broken by getting rid of the man who has done most to build it up. If we let the Company get away with this they will get worse and worse, it claims 34 03 12

1934

Paddy Harris started Progressive Coaches in 1934 with one 28-seater Daimler coach and one hire car. By purchasing second-hand vehicles he built up a fleet of 16 and during the war ran them for the benefit of farmers who needed transport for the German prisoners-of-war who worked for them. In 1942 he bought Camtax, his greatest competitor, then Harvey's Coaches. Now nine new coaches have been bought. They have provision for small tables and the roofs have transparent panels so as to give the impression of riding inside a glass bubble. 59 04 02a

1934 10 04

Sir – since the Eastern Counties Company bought the Cambridge bus service the wages of conductors have started at nine pence and drivers ten pence per hour. Recently pressures have increased as buses are larger than formerly and faster times demanded from drivers. But now the Company have announced restrictions of the overtime which many of the men have always worked since they are buying homes. It does not seem right that more arduous service is rewarded by lower wages – R. Pascal, Cambridge. 34 10 04

1935

Premier Travel Services Ltd begins ("started 1936 with 6 buses- 2 undergraduate each provided £5 as capital; 'Undergraduate Roadways' with trips to Skegness 61 04 21 [9.7] [S.26]

1935 01 23

busmen's dispute with Eastern Counties – 35 01 23b

1936 12 10

Thick fog invaded Romsey Town hours before it reached Huntingdon Road. Once it settled it did so in earnest and visibility was practically nil. Buses were reduced to trailing through the streets on the heels of the conductors and even they could not see their way properly: one stopped himself just in time from leading a No.106 into the pit on Newmarket Road. Where conditions were not quite so bad drivers 'convoyed' and as many as six buses were seen in single file. One conductor walked from Cambridge to Ely, leading his bus – and did the journey in 4½ hours 36 12 10a

1937 02 23

New-constructed bus turning point Newnham route, Barton Rd – 32 02 23d

1937 03 24

When the Salvation Army first came to Cambridge Ellis Merry gave them what was then his wash-house in which to hold their meetings. He was one of the early sergeant-majors and associated himself

with their work in the villages, using a concertina and violin to good effect. He was the first to run a penny bus, from Mill Road into town and also did the horse mail work. Until his retirement Mr Merry carried on the business of undertaker. 37 03 24c

1937 04 24

Hundreds of Cambridge people had to walk to work and home again, or to find lunch in the town, because the bus stoppage at the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company's depot was complete. Not a single bus left and two which arrived from March and Peterborough were met by pickets and not allowed to leave. There was no violence, but men surrounded one bus which attempted to leave on the Chesterton-Station service. No other efforts to take out buses were made. Premier Travel services are not affected. Meanwhile Herbert Robinson have taken delivery of 500 Raleigh bicycles. CDN issues stickers for car drivers willing to take passengers 37 04 24 & a. & c

1937 05 11

It came as something of a surprise to most Cambridge people to find buses on the streets again after a strike of 17 days. When the Eastern Counties Omnibus garage doors opened on Hills Road pedestrians and even motorists stopped to see what would happen. Then drivers and conductors appeared in uniform. Managers say the men have returned to work unconditionally and there would be no victimisation; every man would be reinstated except those who had caused wilful damage to buses. 37 05 11

1938 03 21

Eastern Counties Omnibus Company complained of difficulties manoeuvring their buses at the Drummer Street terminus. They suggested the Corporation reduce the width of the footpath. The Borough Surveyor disagreed. He suggested that the space reserved for the parking of cars should be reduced by 54 feet from the high kerb against the coffee stall. But the Watch Committee decided that the time was now approaching when Eastern Counties should cease to use Drummer Street and consider the provision elsewhere of their own bus station 38 03 21a

1938 03 25

Drummer Street park was made for private cars, and now they seemed to be letting the Bus Company monopolise it; they should find a parking place of their own, a councillor urged. But Ald Starr said it was opened not for private cars but for the benefit of the working men and women who came into Cambridge by bus. Now it was used as a car park by professional and business people who left their vehicles there all morning and afternoon. Coun Stubbs said they were at their wits' end to know what to do with the traffic. It was easy to talk about telling the Bus Company to find a new park, but where could they go? 38 03 25a

1942 04 13

Ministry of Transport order makes bus queues compulsory when six are waiting – local effects – 42 04 13a

1942 04 25

Buses painted grey as no red paint [1.22]

1943 03 05

Non-petrol buses. — It is proposed to adapt 55 more Eastern Counties buses to producer gas in 1943. The Tilling group aim at converting 651 in all during the present year. Already they have adapted 107 including 26 of the Eastern Counties, and these had run 2,500,000 miles, so saving 415,000 gallons of important fuel. 43 03 05 CIPof [1.12]

1944 10 13

Bus overturns in Sidney Street – 44 10 13

1945 01 13

Woman drives Cambridge bus [1.23]

1947 04 05

Sunday bus service starts [1.24]

1947

“Drummer Street too small for buses”, suggest use New Square [3.1]

1949 05 03

Women’s Institute condemns Drummer Street - fear fatal accident [2.3]

1950 04 18

The naming ceremony of “The county of Cambridgeshire”, a new kind of luxury double-deck vehicle owned by Premier Travel Ltd was performed by the chairman of the County Council. Tearing an adhesive strip off the small nameplate Ald Frost wished good luck to everyone who drives it. Afterwards he and other guests went for a ride in the coach. It’s smooth running, luxury seating and smart appearance drew favourable comment. An unusual safety feature is the fitting of a pneumatic door normally opened by the driver. The coach will carry 53 passengers on its two decks. It is designed for long-distance travel and will be used to carry private parties c50 04 18 [2.5]

1952 02 18

The first man to drive a bus from Cambridge station to Chesterton has died at Peterborough. He was Mr T. Aldham who had been employed by the old Ortona Company where he rose from the ranks to be a senior driver and subsequently traffic foreman. Shortly after the Eastern Counties Company took over in 1932 he transferred to Peterborough. At the funeral Mr A. Darby represented Mr J.B. Walford, the original owner of Ortona and there were several of his old colleagues including Messrs R. Peat, A. January, W. Harding and H. Bullock CDN c 18.2.1952

1952 10 23

Proposals for the bus station at Drummer Street, Cambridge, were discussed at the Planning Inquiry. The bus company preferred a station to be sited on New Square which was double the area of Drummer Street. But would passengers agree – and they are entitled to be considered sometimes. Half to two-thirds would use Emmanuel Street. The amount of bus traffic would increase if greater provision was made & there would be a traffic blockage at Four Lamps roundabout

1952 11 13

In swerving to avoid a dog in the road a 101 bus being driven along Green End Road, Cambridge on Sunday morning crashed into a house. The conductress, E. Chalker, who was taking an 11-year-old girl passenger’s fare, was slightly injured. The girl, Marilyn Hall, was also injured when she was shot forward almost into the house. As she was being lifted into the ambulance Marilyn asked her mother “Can we have our fares back now? We didn’t go anywhere”. c 52 11 13

1952 11 20

Edward Lainson of Premier Travel told the Development Plan Inquiry that it would be highly undesirable to move the bus station from Drummer Street to New Square. Access would be difficult and the crossing of Emmanuel Road by a large number of people would constitute a danger. It would cause congestion because a lot of people who found the buses handy would start using their cars.

1952 11 20

County Development Plan discusses Drummer Street, debate over using New Square [2.9, 2.10]

1953 02 20

A travel-worn motor coach came to rest on Market Hill, Cambridge, after a 3,000-mile, seven week “Go to Clacton” tour of the Midlands. And Mr E.A. Lainson, Managing Director of Premier Travel Ltd hopes it will bring him £6,000 worth of business this summer. The 35-seater is no ordinary

vehicle for the passengers cannot see through the windows. But as a mobile cinema it has taken the golden sands and sunshine of Clacton to hundreds of housewives and factory workers in industrial towns and cities far away from the sea, showing an eight-minute colour film 'Back to the Sun' c53 02 20

1953 07 09

Building operations are in progress to modernise the garages at the Hills Road depot of the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company and give appreciable increase in accommodation. A modern canteen and new offices and cycle racks are to be constructed. With commendable optimism, the Company are demolishing a bomb shelter which was installed during the war. Luckily it was never put to the test, but workmen are finding it a difficult assignment – an indication of the strength and protection it would have afforded. At present only one third of the garage space can be used. Buses which are now without a home are being parked in railway sidings nearby. 53 07 09

1953 11 14

Premier Travel and Percival Motors have applied to combine their express carriage services from Cambridge to Oxford. They have been competing on the route since 1951. During term time there was mostly University traffic and in summer a great deal of tourists. The University World Service, said the new service would be of great convenience to students from abroad, many of whom toured England after coming to Cambridge to study. The Eastern Counties, Associated Motorways and United Counties bus companies and the City of Oxford Motor Services opposed the application as did the Railway Executive who said the bulk of the Cambridge-Oxford traffic was moving by rail via Bletchley. c53 11 14

1954

only major items not approved in County Development Plan are site of bus station between Christ's college & Emmanuel

1954 02 26

The death of Mr John Berry Walford, founder of the Ortona Motor Company has recalled memories. He bought up the old Cambridge Motor Omnibus Company; its double-deck vehicles had swept down lamp-posts, been involved in several accidents and were continually breaking down. The Ortona service started in August 1907 with four single-deck buses, but ran at a considerable loss because passengers felt safer in the old horse trams. When the First World War broke out a number of bus chassis were commandeered, the bodies were stored and later re-mounted on other chassis. In 1936 they became part of the Eastern Counties Omnibus Co. 54 02 26

1955 07 28

Patrick Conway told magistrates he was driving a bus on Newmarket Road, intending to turn right. He gave a hand signal and pulled into the centre of the road. A car behind began to overtake forcing a motorcyclist to swerve. The motorist said he thought the bus had stopped for passengers. Conductors in Cambridge buses should give hand signals from the rear of the bus to supplement those of the driver, as they did in London. 55 07 28

1956 04 25

S.E. Pennell, Coach driver of the year – Premier Travel – 56 04 25 & a

1956 07 07

A Chivers bus which has covered over one million miles since 1929 has been handed over to the British Transport Commission museum. It is a Leyland Titan petrol-engined double-deck vehicle acquired from by the National Omnibus Transport Co., London in 1937 to transport fruit pickers. It has an outside staircase by which passengers made their way to the fully enclosed and comfortable compartment above. 56 07 07a

1958 02 10

Whippet Coaches were refused permission to use Drummer Street. Eastern Counties had paid for improvements to the bus station and 85 per cent of their country services were not remunerative. This would add to competition. The Chief Constable said it was already filled and if granted other operators from the Northampton Street terminus would also apply, leading to increased congestion.  
58 02 10

1958 08 26

Harvey's coaches fined – 58 08 26 & a

1959

Miller Bros start based at Stapleford [RH]

1959 04 02

Paddy Harris started Progressive Coaches in 1934 with one 28-seater Daimler coach and one hire car. By purchasing second-hand vehicles he built up a fleet of 16 and during the war ran them for the benefit of farmers who needed transport for the German prisoners-of-war who worked for them. In 1942 he bought Camtax, his greatest competitor, then Harvey's Coaches. Now nine new coaches have been bought. They have provision for small tables and the roofs have transparent panels so as to give the impression of riding inside a glass bubble. 59 04 02a, 59 04 04

1960s The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date

1960 05 13

Jim Wooders, minds parcels at Drummer Street bus station - 60 05 13c; started in 1922 – feature – 65 04 30e , –

1961 11 03

The most modern and up-to-date double-decker buses are coming into service in Cambridge. Fitted with fluorescent lighting, internal heaters, a wider staircase and closing doors, they are the result of many years' research into passenger comfort. The new suspension makes for a much smoother ride and top-deck vibration has been eliminated. The interior has been streamlined to give more room and newly-designed seats reduce 'travel fatigue'. Any minor faults will be corrected in later models 61 11 03 [5.8]

1963

Hard winter brings chaos as buses freeze up [S.39]

1963

Bus crashes in house Chesterton High St [7.3]

1963 06 08

Firemen had to lift passengers down from the top deck of a No.115 bus at the Bentley Road junction with Trumpington Road after a heavy lorry had demolished part of the bus' stairway. The rear of the bus was extensively damaged in the impact. The bus had pulled into a stop when the collision took place and it was pushed nearly 30 yards along the road. The bus conductor was taken to hospital with head injuries and shock after being trapped by his ankle in the collision. Two lady passengers were also hurt. 63 06 08b

1965 05 07

Last Colony bus - Papworth [9.8]

1965 09 23

Poor rural bus services – feature – 65 09 23c

1968

Emmanuel Street widened - substitute for Drummer St with 750ft lay-by [494.5.13]

1971 03 19

Arbury residents cut off from shops; is functional and austere, offering adequate homes at economic rents and a place to sleep. But few pensioners can afford price of bus ride to centre and council puts off cheap bus fare scheme – 71 03 19a

1973

Cambridge bus routes totally rearranged to link Arbury with New Addenbrooke's Hospital, route 101 renumbered as 180 [S.45]

1975 07 28

Cambridge city council has accepted an invitation from the County Council to build an £8,500 bus-rail interchange improvement outside Cambridge railway station. The scheme includes bus waiting bays and shelters c75 07 28

1976 08 06

Cambridge's first bus and bicycles lane comes into operation along Victoria Avenue after the Government approved the city council's experimental plan to put down a special lane from the Four Lamps junction to Victoria Bridge. The plan also bans all parking along the Midsummer Common side; this means the hundreds of motorists who leave their cars there will have to find somewhere else. The aim is to speed up the substantial number of buses using Victoria Avenue, particularly during the evening peak period when traffic congestion causes extensive delays c76 08 06

1978

County announce plans to extend Drummer St into Christ's Pieces, protests, scrapped [8]

1979 06 14

Burwell & District bus co ceases [5.14]

1979 03 07

Double-decker plan for Drummer Street announced, proposals to resite elsewhere [5.13, 8]

1980 03 13

Angry reaction to bus station plan [7.1]

1980 07 02

A former Burwell and District double-decker bus which was saved from the scrapyards near Lincoln has arrived back in the village. The Daimler Fleetline was driven the 120 miles by two former Burwell and District drivers, Jim Neale and Brian Camps. The bus ran faultlessly on the long journey home. Enthusiasts hope to restore it to its former glory so that it can be used for charity work. 80 07 02a

1981 05 15

Cambridge ecologists say a bus which can run on railway lines is the solution to transport problems in local villages. They plan to borrow a prototype and run it from the city centre to Huntingdon, using British Rail's tracks. It would stop at Mill Road, Chesterton and North Arbury as well as the former stations en route to Swavesey. From this point the tracks have been removed but it would run along the trackbed to St Ives and the Hemingfords. 81 05 15a

1981 08 12

Eastern Counties is in the international travel business, advertising trips to France or Sweden. But they have no brochure so people have to queue to ask a clerk. This means the staff are so busy that

they do not have time to answer the telephone: it can take hours to get through to find times of local buses 81 08 12

1981 09 15

A park-and-ride bus service linking shops in the Burleigh Street area with the car park in Cherry Hinton Road has started disastrously. Nobody used the service for several hours. It is being funded with £400 from city lottery profits with Kite traders adding another £100. But councillors say the money should have been earmarked for charity 81 09 15a

1982 07 08

Chaotic Drummer Street is a nightmare for passengers and bus drivers during the busy rush hours. Nobody knows where their buses are and if you go to the information offices the queues are so long that by the time you get to the desk the bus will have gone anyway. Premier Travel driver Hedley Hammond said he was five minutes late already and couldn't get round to his bay. Dismal and dilapidated the worn-out bus station just can't cope with the traffic of the 1980s. 82 07 08a & b

1982 08 27

City councillors want a full-scale transport complex to give quick interchange for rail and bus passengers on long distance and local services to be sited at the railway station. There is plenty of parking with toilet and refreshment facilities already on hand. The County Council's controversial plans to spend £400,000 on rebuilding Drummer Street bus station would still leave it a cramped site with poor access. 82 08 27

1983 06 29

New plans for Drummer Street announced with 'floating' roof [5.2]

1984 05 12

Cambus starts as part of National Bus Company restructuring programme [5.3]

1984 11 20

Cambridge's Hills Road bus depot is to be moved to the outskirts of the city in a multi-million pound swap deal between Cambus and the Stetchworth-based Unex property group. Cambus will exchange its one-acre site for a much larger section of the former D & H Contractor's site in Cowley Road. In return Unex will get control of the bus depot virtually next door to the former Heffer's printing works site which they successfully redeveloped as Botanic House, headquarters of Cambridge Electronic Industries, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and Betjeman House which was subsequently sold for more than £4 million 84 11 20 p1

1985 10 22

Minister approves Drummer Street plans, follows objections & inquiry [5.6, 5.4]

1986 01 07

Premier Travel history – 86 01 07b & c

1986 06 27

A new minibus shuttle service has been launched using 16-seater converted Transits running from the Railway Station to Chesterton. It stops at normal bus stops but can be hailed like a taxi between the Fen Estate, the Golden Hind and the Yorkshire Grey pub. The accent is on a fast, frequent, comfortable service and smoking in the nine new vehicles is banned. By increasing frequency the service becomes more convenient and more likely to attract customers, Cambus claim. A second minishuttle from Coldham's Lane to Teversham Drift may start later 86 06 27

1986 12 08

Cambus bought out by Management Team 1986 [5.7]

1987 12 01

Cambus has bought the entire coach operation of arch rivals Premier Travel. Premier, founded in 1936 has dominated the Cambridge travel scene in recent years and is expecting record profits. It has a fleet of 75 coaches based in Kings Hedges Road and all 129 employees in the coach division will become employees of Cambus. Earlier this year the two companies started a joint venture involving a travel centre at Drummer Street bus station. 87 12 01

1988 01 02

Premier Travel, one of Cambridge's biggest coach firms, has been bought out by its management after an earlier deal with Cambus fell through. Its founder, Arthur Lainson is delighted the company will be retaining its identity. Premier Travel, founded in 1936, has dominated the local travel scene with a fleet of 75 coaches based in King's Hedges Road. The travel part of the business, which includes 14 travel agencies across East Anglia, is to be sold off separately. 88 01 02

1988 12 28

Foxton based Millers Coaches is taking over several major routes in Cambridge following revised legislation relating to bus services. The biggest impact on travellers has been the introduction of the popular 'Noddy Bus' with its low floors and wide doors making it popular with pensioners and young mums with children and pushchairs. Soon they will take delivery of a fleet of Leyland Lynx buses which each carry 51 passengers. 88 12 28c

1989 04 24

Privatisation of bus routes in Cambridge "a disaster", subsidies up 96% ¢CEN 24.4.89

1995 12

Cambus Holdings bought by the Stagecoach group in £12.6 million deal, Dec

Note

I took some of the notes from

N. Pennick. Trams in Cambridge - [P]

M. Seal. Cambridge buses - [S.2]

S. Swingle. Cambridge Street Tramways - [Sw]

Richard Haughey – [RH]